

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, GS

SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF EDUCATION MINISTER OPENS WAY FOR RENEWAL
OF SPD/FDP COALITION IN HESSEN

REF: FRANKFURT'S A-234, NOV. 7 (NOTAL) AND 7003

EUCOM, USAREUR AND USAFE FOR POLADS

1. SUMMARY: QUOTE VOLUNTARY UNQUOTE ANNOUNCEMENT
DECEMBER 4 BY CONTROVERSIAL HESSEN SPD EDUCATION
MINISTER FRIEDEBURG THAT HE WILL NOT BE MEMBER OF NEW
LAND GOVERNMENT HAS REMOVED MAIN OBSTACLE TO RESUMPTION
OF SPD/FDP COALITION TALKS DECEMBER 6, WHICH HAD
STALLED LAST WEEKEND -- ONE MONTH AFTER ELECTIONS --
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CHIEFLY ON ISSUE OF HIS REMAINING IN OFFICE. FRIEDEBURG

HAD BEEN STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY LEFTIST SOUTH HESSEN SPD, BUT FEDERAL SPD LEADERS REPORTEDLY URGED MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD NOT TO RISK CONTINUATION OF COALITION ON PERSONALITY QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MONTH OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR RENEWAL OF SPD/FDP COALITION FOLLOWING OCTOBER 27 HESSEN LANDTAG ELECTIONS, SPD SOUGHT TO CONCENTRATE ON CONTENT OF NEW GOVERNMENT'S POLICY PROGRAM AND TO AVOID QUESTIONS OF PERSONALITY, OF WHICH CONTINUATION IN OFFICE OF CONTROVERSIAL EDUCATION MINISTER LUDWIG VON FRIEDEBURG WOULD CLEARLY BE MOST STICKY. FDP SAW OPPORTUNITY TO DISPLAY INDEPENDENCE AND TO DISPROVE OPINION, WHICH HAD COST PARTY MANY VOTES, THAT IT HAD LOST POWER TO RESTRAIN SPD-LED COALITION. ALTHOUGH POLICY DISCUSSIONS APPARENTLY PROCEEDED REASONABLY WELL, COALITION NEGOTIATIONS WERE SUSPENDED DECEMBER 1 WHEN FDP CHAIRMAN MISCHNICK DECLARED THAT, IF SPD INSISTED ON RETAINING FRIEDEBURG, NEW GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO LAST FULL LEGISLATIVE TERM.

3. ALTHOUGH SOME RIGHT-WING SPD VOICES WERE RAISED AGAINST FRIEDEBURG, SUCH AS DARMSTADT BUNDESTAG DEPUTY METZGER AND FRANKFURT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT KANTZENBACH, MOST SPD LEADERS RUSHED TO HIS DEFENSE. EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF BOTH HESSEN SPD DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS VOTED FOR HIS RETENTION, AND NUMEROUS SUBORDINATE GROUPS AND PERSONALITIES, ESPECIALLY IN SOUTH HESSEN, CALLED FOR HIS RETENTION. FRANKFURT LORD MAYOR ARNDT EVEN SAID THAT SPD SHOULD GO INTO OPPOSITION FOR FOUR YEARS RATHER THAN RENOUNCE FRIEDEBURG. MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD REMAINED PERSONALLY NONCOMMITTAL, AS HE HAD BEFORE ELECTIONS, AND CONTINUED TO REITERATE THAT QUESTION OF PERSONALITY WAS IMMATERIAL IF AGREEMENT REACHED ON POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

4. DESPITE FACT THAT FDP COALITION WITH DREGGER-LED CDU NOT REPEAT NOT CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE, RUMORS BEGAN TO CIRCULATE OF CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO PARTIES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOME SUGGESTED THAT DREGGER WOULD STEP ASIDE IN FAVOR OF LEADER MORE ACCEPTABLE TO FDP OR THAT FDP MIGHT TOLERATE MINORITY CDU GOVERNMENT. FEDERAL SPD LEADERS, INCLUDING BRANDT PERSONALLY, REPORTEDLY WARNED OF NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS IF SPD/FDP COALITION FOUNDERED IN HESSEN. THIS WAS BACKDROP FRO CAUCUS OF SPD LANDTAG FACTION DECEMBER 4 IN BAD ORB TO DISCUSS NEXT MOVES WHEN FRIEDEBURG ANNOUNCED

QUOTE ON OWN INITIATIVE UNQUOTE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE MEMBER OF NEW CABINET, THUS PERMITTING COALITION NEGOTIATIONS TO PROCEED. SPD/FDP TALKS WILL RESUME DECEMBER 6, AND GOAL IS STILL TO PRESENT NEW CABINET TO LANDTAG WHEN OSSWALD SCHEDULED TO BE RE-ELECTED DECEMBER 18.

5. APPARENTLY INSPIRED BY FRIEDEBURG'S EXAMPLE, JUSTICE AND FEDERAL AFFAIRS MINISTER HEMFLER QUOTE SPONTANEOUSLY UNQUOTE INFORMED BAD ORB SESSION THAT HE ALSO DID NOT WISH TO BE PART OF NEW GOVERNMENT. AS REPORTED REF AIRGRAM, NORTH HESSEN SPD HAD PROPOSED NERBERT GUENTHER, WHO IS ANATHEMA TO SOUTH HESSEN PARTY ORGANIZATION FOR HAVING LED RUAL QUOTE REVOLT UNQUOTE AGAINST FRANKFURT LEFTISTS WHEN HE LIVED IN THIS DISTRICT, FOR HEMFLER'S POST. COMBINED BOARDS OF BOTH DISTRICTS, IN WHICH SOUTH HESSEN DOMINATES, SUBSEQUENTLY REINTERATED INTENTION TO RENOMINATE ALL SPD MINISTERS, BUT IF DIFFICULT SEE HOW HEMFLER COULD BE REAPPOINTED WITHOUT ENDORSEMENT OWN DISTRICT ORGANIZATION. HIS QUOTE VOLUNTARY UNQUOTE ABDICATION REMOVES THAT PROBLEM BUT BRINGS QUESTION OF GUENTHER AGAIN TO FORE.

6. IT RUMORED THAT BRANDT PROMISED TO FIND FEDERAL POST IN EDUCATION OR DIPLOMACY FOR FRIEDEBURG. IT WILL NOT BE EASY FIND REPLACEMENT FOR HIM IN WIESBADEN. BONN STATE SECRETARY JOCHIMSEN OR BUDESTAG DEPUTY SPERLING HAVE BEEN MENTIONED. (DEPARTURE OF ANY HESSEN SPD DEPUTY WOULD BRING KARSTEN VOIGT INTO BUNDESTAG.) FAILURE OF OSSWALD TO PROTECT FRIEDEBURG AND ARNDT'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO GO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHOLE WAY IN HIS DEFENSE INCREASES LIKELIHOOD THAT ARNDT WILL REPLACE OSSWALD AS CHAIRMAN OF SOUTH HESSEN SPD IN 1975.HARLAN

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